NEWS

Mansbach leaving behind running legacy at Glenelg Country



Photo by Nate Pesce, Patuxent Homestead

After a standout high school career, Glenelg Country senior Hannah Mansbach is headed to run for the University of Maryland in the fall.

By ZACK NEWMAN
PUBLISHED: May 20, 2013 at 12:56 a.m. | UPDATED: May 31, 2019 at 7:34 p.m.

Listen to this article

With her long curly hair and broad, infectious smile Hannah Mansbach isn't exactly the picture of intimidation. But put the Glenelg Country senior on a track or cross-country course and that quickly changes.

"When I'm on the track, I'm not a very nice person," she said. "I don't smile at a meet."

And while a stoic expression may be standard during competition, Mansbach has had plenty to smile about after the meets during her career with the Dragons. This June, after graduating, she's hoping to add something else to be happy about when she travels to the New Balance Nationals in North Carolina.

That race will serve as the culmination of quite the high school career — one that places her among the top percentile of the state's female runners and helped her earn a scholarship to run next fall at the University of Maryland.



Mansbach's times in the two-mile and 3,200-meter runs during indoor and outdoor track are right there with or better than the top public school girls in the county. And, during the cross-country season, she hit a time of 18:27 to set the standard for county runners.

Additionally, that time put her as the fastest Maryland senior at the Nike Southeast Regional meet in the fall, placing 26th out of 192 competitors hailing from 12 states.

Matt Jelley, the assistant coach and distance specialist at the University of Maryland, said Mansbach was exactly the type of runner they look for when out recruiting.

"She is a tough competitor, she always works really hard," the former Temple University head coach said. "I think that she is going to blossom at the college level."

Ironically enough, Mansbach stumbled into the sport of running on a whim when she was simply looking to try something new.

Her two older sisters, Shana and Claire, both swam competitively and Hannah wanted to get in the pool and swim like her sisters. So at the age of six, Hannah began swimming six days a week for the UMBC Retrievers' competitive club team.

But by the end of eighth grade, she was looking for a change.

"I wanted to switch to a different sport, shake things up," she said.

Hannah's friends pointed her in the direction of cross country and, almost immediately, she was hooked.

"It was really weird because it came very easy to me," said Mansbach, who is also a member of the community service club at Glenelg Country. "I like running because you don't have to think a lot, you just go. I like the quietness of it, you feel liberated."

Hannah's mother, Colleen, said that it is Hannah's grit that sets her apart.

"I'm really proud of Hannah and how hard she's worked," said the former University of Maryland professor. "She has had to do a great deal of it on her own, which isn't easy, and she has shown a lot of dedication. She did not take the easy way out."

For her first three years at Glenelg Country, Mansbach was limited to only being able to showcase her talents during the cross-country season.

It wasn't until this year that the Dragons added indoor and outdoor track teams to the fold in conjunction with the addition of a rubberized outdoor track and turf field. Not having a school-sanctioned sport never hindered Mansbach's training, though.

To stay in shape, she turned to a 48-year-old private coach with 20 years of experience, Anibal Gonzalez. Mansbach's drive was evident right away.

"Hannah has a great work ethic, she is not afraid to work hard," Gonzalez said. "She has a drive in her that you don't see in very many kids. On the weekends, when everybody else isn't doing anything, she's out running."

In order to get her workouts in, Mansbach would run on the River Hill High School track at 5 a.m., hours before students arrived at school.

From a running standpoint, Mansbach's pacing is what stands out to Gonzalez.

"She has that natural ability to be very consistent. Hannah's main strength is being able to maintain a good, solid pace consistently for an entire race. She just keeps churning."

Soon after Mansbach began training with Gonzalez, he decided to pair her up with his daughter, Ellie.

"It just sort of happened naturally. I saw that Hannah was running pretty well, so when I was planning workouts I was incorporating Ellie and Hannah into the same workout," Anibal Gonzalez said.

Ellie, a junior at Catholic High School in Baltimore, and Mansbach quickly built the reputation of being two of the top private school runners in the state. This past fall, the duo went one-two at the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland cross country championships.

"Ellie and Hannah are pretty similar from a competitive standpoint, but there's no rivalry here," he said. "You need to get someone to run with. Hannah's so talented, that there really isn't anyone at her school or local for her to run with. These top tier girls spend a lot of time alone on the road alone all by themselves."

Ellie even acknowledges how much having Mansbach has benefited her.

"If I didn't have her, I don't know where I'd be today," she said. "From a morale standpoint, she definitely boosts me, and that directly correlates to times. I have seen a huge improvement in the past two years that I've known her."

Next year when she joins the Terrapins, Mansbach will have a whole new set of training partners. But, even though getting a scholarship to one of the top local college programs was quite an accomplishment, she's not taking anything for granted.

"You're never satisfied with what you get," she said. "You always want to keep getting your numbers down."

